

THE 50+ Connection

NEWS and EVENTS from the
Howard County Office on Aging and Independence

A Publication of the Department of Community Resources and Services

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Caregiving in Crisis: Facing New Realities

During National Family Caregivers Month, the Caregiver Action Network (caregiveraction.org/covid-19) addresses the new realities family caregivers face during these uncertain times.

Family caregivers manage health emergencies, juggle priorities, and suffer isolation — and all that was before COVID. As the 2020 theme **Caregiving in Crisis** suggests, the pandemic brings even more challenges for family caregivers. “It’s natural for caregivers to have feelings of isolation and frustration,” says Kathy Wehr, manager of the Office on Aging and Independence’s caregiver support program, “Fatigue and other physical symptoms and a loss of initiative are common as well.”



Howard County Office on Aging and Independence

Caring for yourself is vital. Wehr recommends asking yourself the following questions:

How do you feel mentally and physically?

Even though these are unprecedented circumstances, caregivers still need to address their own mental and physical health in addition to their loved one’s needs.

Are your needs being placed on the back burner?

Much of our attention is focused on COVID-19 and how to avoid infection; however, we also need to take care of our needs in order to stay healthy in mind, body and spirit.

Are you trying to do it all?

There is only so much we can do at this time; don’t push yourself. Take this time to re-prioritize yourself into the equation. And — just maybe when this is over you — will have a new perspective on ways you can take care of YOU.

Are you still doing things that you enjoyed before COVID-19, or when your caregiving journey began?

There is a new normal to life right now, so take time to establish your own new normal and be sure to include time for yourself to go for a walk, enjoy a movie, read a book, or soak in a hot bath. The moments we give to ourselves will benefit our loved-one as well.

Above all, recognize that feeling isolated and alone can wreak havoc on your emotional health. Your relationship to others involved in care may have changed due to the pandemic and supports available in normal circumstances might not be available now. Maintain contact with health care providers, family members and friends by phone, email, Facetime, or via Zoom or Skype to seek advice, ask for assistance or just have a conversation.

A Message from Howard County Executive Calvin Ball



This month as we approach the cooler, winter months, we must remain prepared and vigilant against COVID-19. As more activities are held indoors, where the virus can spread more easily, it is critical that we all practice mitigation measures including wearing a mask, keeping a safe physical distance, and washing our hands frequently.

Each November I am reminded of our Veterans – like Vivian Bailey, or as most people know her, Ms. Millie. Millie is a longtime Howard County resident and served in the military during World War II. Just last year it was announced that the neighborhood square in Downtown Columbia would be named after her. And now, the **Vivian C. ‘Millie’ Bailey Neighborhood Square** is officially open for our residents to enjoy. Her passion and commitment to serving others endures to this day, and at over 100 years of age, she continues to give back to her community in many ways. I would also like to recognize all our veterans in Howard County as we approach **Veteran’s Day on November 11**. So many of our residents have served honorably in the U.S. military and they deserve our deep gratitude and respect for their service.

November is **National Family Caregivers Month**, a time to recognize, support, and empower family caregivers. We know how difficult this pandemic has been for so many – but especially our caregivers who have been isolated and without their usual support systems while taking care of loved ones. Be sure to check-in on a caregiver you know to see if you can safely lend a helping hand. With COVID-19 still being a prevalent risk to our community, be sure to take necessary precautions.

As always, wishing our community a safe and healthy month ahead.

RESOURCES FOR CAREGIVERS

- Caregiver Support Program: www.howardcountymd.gov/caregiver
- Maryland Access Point of Howard County: 410-313-1234 (voice/relay)
- Alzheimer’s Association 24/7 Help Line: 800-272-3900
- Alzheimer’s Foundation of America: 866-232-8484
- Caregiver Action Network Help Desk: 855-227-3640



Happy Thanksgiving!

With sincere gratitude for all caregivers and to all those we serve through the Howard County Department of Community Resources and Services, we wish you and your loved ones a joyful holiday!

Four Simple Steps to Control Type 2 Diabetes

by Carmen Roberts, MS, RD, LDN, Nutritionist
Howard County Office on Aging and Independence



November is Diabetes Awareness Month, so it's a great time to talk about this chronic disease that affects so many Americans. It is estimated that over 34 million Americans (that's just over one in every 10 people) have diabetes. What is surprising is that one in three people have prediabetes, and many do not even know they have it.

The complications from diabetes can be serious, and include damage to the eyes, kidneys and nerves. However there are simple things you can do to reduce your risk of the complications of diabetes by taking four simple steps to improve your health:

- LOSE WEIGHT FOR GOOD.** Even a small weight loss can make a big difference in blood sugar control. The American Diabetes Association (ADA) states that just a 10-15 pound weight loss can significantly lower your blood sugar.
- GET MOVING.** The ADA also emphasizes that moderate exercise (such as brisk walking) just 30 minutes/day, 5 days/week, can lower both blood sugar and blood pressure.
- EAT MORE FIBER.** Limit the amount of processed foods and added sugars in your diet, and replace them with foods such as whole grains and vegetables. Fiber slows down the rise in blood sugar and can help with weight control by making you feel full for longer. A high fiber diet can help you reduce your intake of sweets and processed foods. Aim for 25-30 grams of fiber daily.
- MAKE POSITIVE LIFESTYLE CHANGES.** If you have diabetes, you are also at risk for developing cardiovascular disease. Lower your blood pressure, quit smoking and manage your cholesterol levels. This can help to further reduce your risk for disease.

Managing type 2 diabetes is crucial to decrease your risk of disease-related complications. Research shows that simple changes such as modest weight loss, increased physical activity and dietary changes reduce the risk of diabetes-related complications. If you have been diagnosed with prediabetes, **it's not too late**. For some people, early treatment can actually return blood sugar levels to the normal range.



PRESENTED BY



This online event will feature a variety of expert speakers on health and financial topics; engaging classes; entertainment; and informative exhibits. The 50+EXPO runs November 1, 2020, through January 31, 2021. You can visit all programs at any time during the three month event.

thebeaconnewspapers.com/virtual-expo

Medicare Open Enrollment October 15 – December 7

It's time to review your current Medicare plan to see if it will work for you next year. You can stay in your current plan if you are happy or compare plans to see if there is an option that better fits your needs. **Contact SHIP** — Howard County's State Health Insurance Assistance Program — at 410-313-7392 (voice/relay) to schedule a virtual appointment with a SHIP counselor. **For more information, visit us at www.howardcountymd.gov/SHIP.**



KNIT/CROCHET for VETERANS!

The Howard County Office of Veterans and Military Families is collecting homemade **SCARVES AND HATS** for military members.

Drop off your items no later than **Friday, November 6**, at the Department of Community Resources and Services, one of our 50+ Centers (excluding Bain), or one of four additional locations.

Visit us at www.howardcountymd.gov/veterans for details.

For more information, contact Lisa B. Terry

★ PHONE 410-313-0821 (VOICE/RELAY)

★ EMAIL veterans@howardcountymd.gov

9830 Patuxent Woods Drive, Columbia, MD 21046

www.howardcountymd.gov/veterans

EARLY VOTING IN HOWARD COUNTY

CAST YOUR EARLY VOTE!

October 26 to November 2

7 am to 8 pm
Sunday through Saturday

- ☐ Long Reach High School
6101 Old Dobbin Lane, Columbia
- ☐ Marriotts Ridge High School
12100 Woodford Drive, Marriottsville
- ☐ Meadowbrook Athletic Complex
5001 Meadowbrook Lane, Ellicott City
- ☐ Reservoir High School
11550 Scaggsville Road, Fulton
- ☐ Wilde Lake High School
5460 Trumpeter Road, Columbia



Department of Community Resources and Services

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